DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 097 240 SO 007 798

TITLE	The Fourth and Fifth Years: Patterns of Organization in Two Secondary Schools. Schools Council Pamphlet No. 13.
INSTITUTION	Schools Council, London (England).
PUB DATE	74
NOTE	42p.
AVAILABLE FROM	Copies are available free, while supplies last, on application to the Central Despatch Section, Schools Council, 160 Great Portland Street, London W1N 6LL
EDRS PRICE	MF-$0.75 HC Not Available from EDRS. PLUS POSTAGE
DESCRIPTORS	Ability Grouping; Case Studies; *Comparative Education; *Comprehensive High Schools; Curriculum Design; Educational Guidance; *Educational Objectives; Governance; Grouping (Instructional Purposes); Heterogeneous Grouping; Instructional Program Divisions; *School Organization; *Secondary Education; Student Needs
IDENTIFIERS	Great Britain

ABSTRACT

The aim of the pamphlet is to consider, against the background of the school as a whole and the community which it serves, the academic and pastoral needs of 14- to 16-year-old pupils and the curricular opportunities provided to meet them. Two case studies of relatively large secondary schools are presented because many teachers are working for the first time in such schools. General points relating to organization are the formulation of aims and objectives of a school; decision making with respect to organizational strategies and priorities; and curricular organizational patterns. In the case studies each analysis considers the school's background and objectives; education prior to fourth and fifth years; preparation for curricular specialization; the nature of fourth- and fifth-year courses; balance of curriculum; opportunities for the less academically interested; organization of courses; staffing; education at ages 16 to 19; and organization for change. A list of questions pertinent to the two case studies summarizes a number of issues of particular significance within the two schools. (JH)

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THE FOURTH AND FIFTH YEARS

patterns of organization in two secondary schools

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FOREWORD

The aim of this pamphlet is to consider, against the background of the school as a whole and the community which it serves, the academic and pastoral needs of 14- to 16-year-old pupils and the curricular opportunities provided to meet them. The emphasis is on organization rather than on curriculum as such, but the introduction and concluding chapter, which comprises a set of questions for study, seek to highlight a range of issues which, to a varying extent, affect decisions relating to the pastoral and academic organization of the fourth and fifth years of any secondary school. In order to provide actual case studies, both to illustrate different patterns of organization observed by field officers of the Schools Council and to be the basis of detailed study by teachers, the organization of two schools is described. The descriptions are not provided as models. They are contrasting examples of how two relatively large comprehensive schools are seeking to meet the needs of their own particular pupils in their own particular situations.

In preparing the pamphlet as a contribution to the increasing study which teachers are making of organization - in schools, at teachers' centres, and on courses - the field officers were conscious of the organizational issues facing teachers in secondary schools, both heads and assistants, as a result of:

(a) developments in the curriculum at all stages of secondary education;

(b) developments in the curriculum of the fourth and fifth years themselves, including those stimulated by the raising of the school leaving age;

(c) reorganization of secondary education and the consequent rapidly increasing number of schools which are both large and, often for the first time, catering for pupils of all abilities;

(d) the growing complexity of schools and the increasing range of opportunities which they are called on to provide as a result of the developing needs of pupils in the present changing society.

Most of the issues raised are not peculiar to large schools, and smaller schools, often in rural areas, have particular problems of their own, especially when with more limited resources of staffing and accommodation they are providing for pupils of all abilities. This pamphlet, however, focuses especially on the organization of larger schools, of broadly five- to ten-form entry, because this is the type of school in which a great many teachers are working for the first time. Whilst both schools described are all-through 11 to 18 comprehensive schools and the phrase fourth and fifth years is used throughout to denote those concerned with 14- to 16-year-old pupils, the questions raised have at least

equal significance in schools catering for other age ranges. It is hoped that this pamphlet will also help to stimulate discussion in advance of the report of the Schools Council's Working Party on the Whole Curriculum.

Two further points should be stated at the outset:

(a) Although the pamphlet focuses most sharply on the fourth and fifth years of secondary school, the curriculum and organization of these years cannot be considered in isolation. It was felt necessary, therefore, to describe in some detail the organization in the earlier years and considerations relating to post-16 education, as well as the nature of the area which the school serves.

(b) School organizations are continually changing, yet both schools included in the pamphlet are described at a particular moment of time. A feature common to each is continuing change: the present organizations represent considerable modifications on those originally introduced, and neither school considers its present organization the ultimate one.

I. INTRODUCTION

The starting point for study and appraisal of possible patterns of fourth- and fifth-year organization for a particular school varies. In some schools, already established within their areas, it will usually involve some evaluation of the effectiveness of the present organization to meet what have become present needs. In other schools, for example those very recently formed by merging schools, study of existing or recent practice and the attitudes and expectations of parents and the locality is of particular importance. In many of these schools, buildings - often separated - impose initial constraints of a major nature. In others, especially in new schools serving largely new and growing communities, the head teacher and his staff are able to develop from scratch a philosophy and a strategy for their school.

Whatever the starting point, however, any study of the curriculum and organization of pupils aged 14 to 16 must be considered within those of the whole school; appraisal of the pastoral and academic organization has to be made against the school's own aims, objectives and priorities; and these aims, objectives and priorities cannot be discussed in isolation from the nature and characteristics of the area and the particular needs of the pupils the school serves. Patterns of local employment (and unemployment), pupil and parental expectations and aspirations, mobility of population and other environmental factors significantly influence decisions which may be made. For example, a school in an area which is new and still seeking to come together as a community, or one in an area including many Service children, may give particular priority to an organization based on mixed-ability pastoral groups in order to provide a stable and socially cohering base; whereas a school in a well established area with little movement of population, and conscious of parental expectations over academic results, may give greater priority to a banded organization which allows staff a more gentle introduction to teaching a wider range of ability. Whatever the situation or constraints, whether of buildings, of staff experience or of local attitudes, the organization is the instrument through which the educational policy and priorities of a school are articulated and, together with the approach to the curriculum, expressed.

General points relating to organization

In approaching school organization it may be helpful to identify a number of stages:

(a) Formulating the aims and objectives of the school. As indicated, this will take into account the needs of the pupils and the nature of the area served, the expectations of parents and of pupils, and the attitudes of pupils, parents and staff, as well as being significantly influenced by the educational philosophy of the head teacher and the staff. Different types of objectives will be distinguished: personal, social and intellectual. Some may be realizable in the short term, for example achieving a particular facility in a modern language or qualifying for a particular apprenticeship; whilst some are not, for example education in personal relationships or developing an understanding of moral issues over which personal decisions continually have

to be made. The Schools Council's Enquiry 1: Young school leavers (HMSO, 1968) revealed how much the views of head teachers and their staff and those of parents and pupils themselves over the relative priorities of the schools's objectives can differ.

(b) Fundamental decisions over strategy and priorities. These will be determined by (a), but they will also be significantly influenced by existing constraints, especially accommodation, staffing resources and experience and, in some cases, previous undertakings given to parents by the local education authority, possibly at the time of secondary reorganization. These decisions will affect:

(i) social and pastoral organization;

(ii) curriculum: content, balance, subject-based or integrated areas, development from one to another;

(iii) teaching groups: streaming, banding, mixed-ability groups plus setting, mixed-ability groups, progressive differentiation among differing abilities.

A real issue at this stage can be a degree of conflict between academic aims and organization on the one hand and social aims on the other. Sometimes they might reinforce each other, for example in broadening the horizons and increasing opportunities for pupils from underpriviliged backgrounds; sometimes they might be in conflict, for example in creating social divisiveness or in encouraging a competitive attitude. Balance between academic and social objectives again raises the question of the school's total objectives and priorities. Two further important points are highlighted:

(i) Who makes these fundamental decisions; how are they communicated; to whom?

(ii) In achieving the longer-term aims of the school, it is often necessary to distinguish between the organization which is hoped for ultimately, and that which, allowing for teaching and material resources, staff experience and local attitudes, can be effected immediately.

(c) Detailed consideration of curriculum and organizational patterns. In considering particular organizational patterns, especially in the large and complex school, an important practical need is clarity of presentation: to staff, to pupils, to parents, to oneself - different types of presentation and degree of detail may be necessary in each case. A particular problem is that of presenting a clear but detailed picture of the organization of the whole school, so that it is possible to see the wood for the trees: then, thinking over the total organization can be clear, decisions informed and the implications of the piece of organization in relation to what can be provided elsewhere may be readily seen. At this detailed stage of studying particular curricular and organizational patterns, a number of specific considerations call for attention such as:

(i) Availability of resources: staff (e.g. number of teachers able to teach a given subject at the same time), accommodation, pressure on library or resources centre as a result of the proposed activities.

(ii) Deployment of staff: to what extent is provision in one section of the school at the unreasonable expense of another section; who should teach in one section or year and who definitely should not; policy over newly qualified

teachers; what amount of time is available for meetings of groups of teachers, departmental leadership, for desirable activities at the teachers' centre, as well as for preparation and marking?

(iii) Balance in the nature of pupils' experience as well as in their curriculum: at a particular stage is there an excess of one particular mode of working, e.g. project work in several subjects?

(iv) Interrelation between organization and curriculum: in what ways, if any, are the social and/or academic organizations imposing limitations on the current curriculum of pupils or the range of choice subsequently available to them: for example in an organization banded on ability are there curriculum differences between different bands; if so, are they justifiable and do they preclude subsequent movement between bands?

(v) Flexibility of choice within a year group: especially in the fourth and fifth years, does the proposed organization undesirably reduce pupils' choice, whether of subject or examination objective, and at the same time make for uneconomic staffing: for example, is the fourth-year organization in effect that of a number of separate small schools, one working towards GCE, one towards CSE, one to no external examination?

The fourth and fifth years

The final chapter of the pamphlet lists a range of questions which might be studied in the light of the two examples which are recorded. They also summarize a number of issues of particular significance in the two school organizations which are described, though policy and decisions in relation to these will differ. To help to highlight questions of special relevance to the organization of fourth- and fifth-year courses without detracting from the individuality of each school, the following broad headings have been kept specially in mind in each description:

(a) school's background and objectives

(b) prelude to the fourth and fifth years

(c) preparation and decision making

(d) nature of fourth- and fifth-year courses

(e) balance of curriculum

(f) opportunities for the less academically interested

(g) organization of the courses

(h) staffing

(i) looking ahead to 16 to 19 education

(j) organization for change.

II. SCHOOL A

1. Background

History

The school opened in new buildings in September 1962 as a six-form entry comprehensive with 360 boys and girls in years I and II. The building was ostensibly purpose-built but in effect this meant the provision of six house dining/common rooms and six heads of house studies; for the remainder the concept was traditional, i.e. a series of boxes. The annual intake was never in fact a six-form entry and the existing buildings were outgrown by 1966. Temporary additional premises were used until 1968 when the school was reorganized as an eight-form entry and new buildings provided, since when the annual entry has been nine-form entry!

Nature of the area

The school is an area school serving a section of a new town, with the addition of one village community. The village is five miles from the school. It is by no means a housing estate: there is a fair proportion of owner-occupied houses and the general standard of housing is good, reflecting an area of relative affluence. The population is primarily working class, mostly skilled and semi-skilled. There is a reasonable intake of so-called middle class which tends to be industrial: research and other workers, middle management. The professional element is smaller. The overall situation gives a diverse social intake and the traditional class lines are obscured by a greater social coherence than that found in a more traditional town. There is also an approximation to common economic expectations. The ethos is materialistic.

The social instability usually ascribed to new towns is not particularly evident. Most children have had the whole of their education in the town. There is, however, mobility within the town and wider movement amongst the children of the industrial middle class.

There has been no 11+ in the town for ten years. It is usual to attend the area secondary school but parents may opt out either to other area comprehensive schools, to a girls' grammar school six miles away, or to a boys' grammar school twelve miles away. This rarely arises. The majority of children come from area primary schools (six) but the effect of movement within the town has gradually increased this number of minority contributory schools, for brothers and sisters have the automatic right of entry. These family connexions are pronounced and are tending to upset the niceties of balanced tutor groups.

Local patterns of employment

There is full employment within the town - diversity of employment for boys, more restricted for girls. The industries are predominantly 'modern' - light engineering, electronics, plastics - and the jobs are increasingly administrative. The town is within easy travelling distance of London, and can be considered within the economic hinterland, although it is not a commuter town. This does offer clerical openings for girls. The industrial pattern

of training is progressive and the traditional apprenticeship appears to be declining. The building trade offers labouring jobs and the countryside is sufficiently near to offer openings for boys in farming and market gardening. Retail trade, social amenities and welfare agencies, including a large hospital and health centres, provide plenty of non-industrial jobs.

Further education

The town has its own technical college - with good engineering, commerce, catering and art departments. There is an engineering training centre for craft apprentices. Two other technical colleges are within travelling distance. The absence of secondary modern schools has meant that the local college has not concentrated on supplementary O- and A-level courses. A-level courses are available in the sciences, engineering, economics and sociology. There has been a considerable movement towards 'rationalization' of post-16 courses between the comprehensive school and the college, e.g. sociology, and 'engineering-science', are deliberately restricted to the college, specialist art students take their foundation course there, pre-nursing is linked with the college and the hospital. Another new development is the development of 'linked' courses at the pre-16 stage, particularly in engineering and catering.

There is a senior evening institute, with nearly 2000 students, which meets four nights per week. Its principal is a head of department in the school. In theory these are two separate establishments; in practice and by personal relationships, they function closely together. Senior pupils from year IV are encouraged to use the institute for recreational or supplementary studies.

Recreational facilities

There are a number of youth centres attached to designated schools in the town. These are separate from the senior evening institute schools. It seems to be a pity to separate 'crabbed age and youth' in this way. Two such youth centres serve the catchment area. It would be true to say that the children would prefer a youth centre in their own school and have a proprietary attitude. The sixth form have their own club which meets on Friday nights and joins with groups of the PTA, which also meet on Fridays, for activities such as swimming, badminton and chess. Casual recreational activities, particularly dances, are held frequently and on the slightest excuse.

There is an open non-statutory youth club which tries to supplement the LEA centres; for instance it runs a thriving 'greasers' club and has been a focal point for inter-sixth-form meetings - a 'comprehensive' enough service. There are also a number of church youth groups.

The sports centre, run by a sports trust, is a very thriving athletic centre and is situated in the catchment area of the school. It has its own youth activities but youngsters can also participate in adult activities - a healthy development.

The UDC provides a swimming pool and tennis courts, and its sports council subsidizes such things as the recreational football league and canoe centre. It also runs the local dance hall and a play scheme during school holidays. The uniformed organizations seem to be increasing in number - scouts, guides, army cadets, ATC, woodcraft folk.

There is a town youth orchestra. The school has its own Saturday morning music school, as have a number of schools. The technical college

has an art club for young people on Saturdays. Drama societies encourage young people.

The provision of recreational facilities by commercial interests is relatively poor, for example there is only one cinema and a bowling alley and, surprisingly, there are few coffee bars.

Aims

The headmaster believes that any school, whatever its type, should do the very best for all its pupils dependent upon their age, ability and aptitude. He states his philosophy as follows:

'I believe that the individual personality is all important, and that the individual only develops mature personality through the quality of social relationships. It is a delicate balance of personal attributes and social needs, of nature and nurture. It follows from this that children are different, that they cannot be considered as "types" nor can they be considered as equal. It is our task to cater for their academic differences as they develop and not as they are measured at any one particular age. I choose to call this "progressive differentiation". We have tried to establish a school which offers a wide range of educational experience based on a liberal and balanced curriculum common to all in the first three years but which gives increasing diversity of courses of study and options as the children progress through school. This presupposes a constant review of progress and personal guidance.

'Academic and social development must go on together; we are concerned with not only what children know but the sort of persons they are going to become. We have tried to provide a socially rich and diverse education in the hope that by sharing experiences they will learn to make personal judgements based upon mutual understanding and tolerance of individual differences. I do not believe that the mixing of children from diverse social backgrounds ushers in the millennium of the classless society or the brotherhood of man, but that it does provide the opportunity for common ground and understanding. We have tried to foster this natural social structure in our house organization.

'I believe that academic and social development can only be achieved by putting the school into the widest social context of the home and local community. Understanding the individual child without reference to an intimate knowledge of parents and home is a very restricted exercise. Parental liaison is seen as vital, and opportunity for individual parents to meet heads of house, tutors, subject teachers and myself, is built into our organization. We must have an "open door". Liaison with the members of the local community - clergy, doctors, politicians, public officials, community workers - is absolutely vital. In short, we are trying to conceive of our role as being the education of our children as individuals, as citizens and as workers.'

2. Social organization

The school is organized vertically into six houses. These reflect the six-form entry for which the accommodation was originally designed, but they have become imbalanced with the growth to eight-form entry: as a result two houses receive a double entry each year. This means too that there is a social accommodation shortage. It is not possible to house all tutor groups in the house blocks and priority must be given to the younger children. Other groups must accept their lot in engineering workshops,

laboratories and art rooms. The basic unit is a house tutor group of approximately thirty children, similar in age but dissimilar in every other respect. It is a microcosm of the total entry and is a balanced mixed-ability group. The growing family-house connexions have tended in some instances to affect the balance of spread of ability through the tutor groups - but if the school had to state a priority it would be to maintain academic balance, for the tutor group is also the basic teaching unit. The tutor stays with the tutor group, given continuity, for five years. The same principle applies in the sixth form although the tutor groups are not house based but subject-area based. Sixth forms still belong to a house, no longer dependent upon the tutorial house function but playing a part in supporting the pastoral and social role. They also have their own common room.

The horizontal tutor group is preferred to the vertical, mixed age group, for it enables the tutor group to develop corporate identity by mixing, moving and having its being within the timetable. The identification of the academic and social organization in the basic tutor unit is felt to be very important.

The function of the house is conceived as both corporate and personal, and the two are equal elements in pastoral care. This is a shared responsibility between head of house and tutor, the former giving the important continuity factor, the latter the daily contact. Heads of house make contact with primary school teachers before the children come and interview parents individually as soon as the children are in the school. They also have their own house PTAs. Dining is in houses, discipline also, and academic progress is reported and recorded through them. The heads of house are responsible for vocational guidance in years III and IV, guide pupils and parents in their academic choices, and liaise with the Youth Employment Service. They also liaise directly with social agencies, the probation service, the social service department, the psychiatric and medical services.

Parental involvement is integral to the school's philosophy. The school believes that it is impossible to understand a child without knowing the family, as opposed to 'knowing of' the family background. The real success of its parent-school liaison lies in the general acceptance of the school within its area as a 'caring' place and consequently it acts as an immediate calling point for parents in trouble or need. In many ways the school has had the traditional parish role of the church thrust upon it. There are of course pitfalls in such a situation: members of staff are tempted to play psychiatrist, family doctor and welfare worker. The school's role is to listen and to enlist professional support as soon as possible.

The way is paved for formal liaison by visits from the headmaster to the local primary schools to meet parents six months before children move to the school.

Parental contacts:

First year	-	Personal interview with head of house
		Open night with subject teachers
Second year	-	Open night with subject teachers
Third year	-	Personal interview with head of house
		Open night with subject teachers
Fourth year	-	Open night with subject teachers

Fifth year – Personal interview with deputy and senior mistress (ideally this should be with head of house, but time allowance is against it)

Open night with subject teachers

Sixth year – Open night with subject teachers

Personal interviews with head, deputy, senior mistress.

Response to personal interviews is excellent – usually 100 per cent. To open nights it is less so – between 60 per cent and 70 per cent.

In addition, each house has its own PTA which deals with involvement at house level, e.g. house camps, visits, fund-raising. There is a federal school PTA which organizes large-scale events, e.g. the annual fete, and arranges the winter programme of lectures.

Parents are represented on the governing body.

Progress reports are fed back to parents twice per term, but only where there is very good or very bad progress. Parents are encouraged to come in to talk to the head of house when they or members of staff are worried by lack of progress.

Behaviour problems are brought to parental notice and parents are called in. The discipline of the school lies four-square on parent involvement. Behavioural problems are dealt with by a link involving subject teacher, tutor, head of house and parents. Remarkably few parents refuse to co-operate; rather more are ineffectual when they do so.

In the last instance staff try not to talk down to parents but believe that they know more about their children than the school does and that the staff need their help to help their child.

Particular features

There is a unit for the partially hearing as an integral part of the school. The children are ordinary members of their tutor groups and share a proportion of lessons with them.

3. Academic organization of years I to III

The school's basic belief is not that all children are equal, but that they are all different. The academic task is to give opportunities for their differences to develop and to match school organization to these emerging differences and needs. The school practises 'progressive differentiation'.

The eight-form entry is conceived as two blocks of four-form entry, each of which attends lessons in major departments at the same time, giving a potential teaching group of 120+. This enables team-teaching, mixed-ability grouping or setting as the need arises. The school has tried to create a flexible organization. In years I and II mixed-ability teaching is the norm in all subjects except mathematics and French, which are setted. Children in need of remedial teaching are catered for by a 'remedial' teacher attached to each team of subject teachers. In smaller departments, where teams to teach 120+ are not practicable, 60+ is the unit, which may be sub-divided into two or three sub-groups depending on the subject. (See Diagram 1 on page 20.)

In year III, setting is extended to include the sciences. (See Diagram 2 on page 21.)

The keynote is flexibility. A common curriculum is followed which is intended to be as broad as possible, so that youngsters can sample a wide diversity of learning experiences, some of which they will enjoy and some of which they will dislike. School priority is to try to create the conditions for maximum individual learning. At the same time it is recognized that certain disciplines and methods need different sorts of teaching groups. The organization is designed to enable either an ultra open-ended situation or a tight homogeneous group.

Pupil assessment is continuous, based upon classwork, homework, group or individual studies, recall factual tests which are mainly teacher-devised and others which are standardized. There are no formal examinations until year III. Progress reports go to heads of house every half-term; a written report and an open evening verbal report is given to parents each year. There are annual review meetings of all subject teachers.

Preparatory work in third year

By year III the emergent aptitudes and abilities are becoming discernible, but have by no means ceased to mature. Do they ever? Differentiation is well under way. General science splits into the separate sciences; workshop syllabus includes technical drawing; the second language is given more time. The same broad curriculum persists and basically there are few differences from years I and II.

The schedule for the second term in year III is:

(a) Questionnaire - designed to clarify children's thinking about themselves, their abilities, interests and ambitions - introduced and guided by tutor and head of house, but compiled by the children themselves.

(b) Introductory talks by careers advisory officers to the children and to a parents' meeting.

(c) Explanatory talk by head of house to children and to parents' meeting on possibilities of years IV and V. The choice sheet is introduced and explained.

(d) Choice sheet - compiled by children and parents at home.

(e) Mid-year examinations - results, plus continuous assessment of years I, II and III, and subject teacher recommendations passed to heads of house. This forms the basis for (f).

(f) Individual interviews - with pupils, parents and heads of house. Choices made: these are not finalized until the end of year III and may be amended during the first term of year IV. This is a guided choice but a real one.

(g) Reviews - choice sheets are reviewed by headmaster and by staff review meetings. The headmaster, deputy head and senior mistress act as advisers throughout. The master in charge of careers information is available for consultation by pupils at specific times.

4. Fourth- and fifth-year courses

Nature

The curriculum and organization are based upon certain principles:

(a) A common broad curriculum gives way to a system of choice while maintaining balance. Areas of experience broadly categorized into language, number, the humanities, aesthetics, scientific, physical, are conceived as necessary in a balanced curriculum. Choices are conceived as being an exercise within this broad principle.

(b) All needs of all ability ranges can be met.

(c) Interest needs can be catered for.

(d) Vocational needs can be met, without being narrow.

The notion underlying all is to meet immediate needs but keep future developments as open as possible in the belief that the maturational process is no more fixed at 14+ than it is at 11+.

Pupils may choose from either a miscellany of individual subjects or a group of subjects, which are in effect courses. In the former, GCE or CSE may be taken: in the latter, CSE or no external examination. In respect of examinations, therefore, it is of little consequence whether pupils in the middle range of ability choose from a miscellany of individual subjects or a group of subjects - see the graph showing distribution of ability (Diagram 4 on page 23). Numbers of groups/sets vary according to pupils' numbers and wishes.

There is no leavers' course, although initially the school had one. The percentage of leavers is between 25 per cent and 20 per cent of the age group and they form a minority. The school's experience was that usually the group 'stuck out like a sore thumb' and cut across its practice of integrating children, not separating them. Moreover, staff felt that many of the so-called Newsom principles were just as applicable to all fourth-year children and consequently opted for wide use of Mode III CSE. The modern studies course in particular engages a far larger percentage of the school than just the leavers. Lastly, the school felt that it was not meeting the vocational and personal needs of children by denying them the same subject and course choices as the 'stayers'. It gives the youngsters time to change their minds, and a significant number do so.

Mode III syllabuses are usually followed at CSE and there are Mode III O-level syllabuses in English, history, human biology and mathematics. The school finds that Mode III gives a freedom, albeit controlled, to staff to teach as they want without the constraints of an external syllabus. It makes staff consider first principles of syllabus-assessment procedure. It enables staff to provide assessments outside traditional disciplines. Within the course, continual assessment puts recall into perspective and gives weighting to other criteria enabling the hard-working, well-organized child to be confident in the validity of the examination. It does mean extra work, and movement of staff could provide a lack of continuity which would be dangerous. A team involvement is considered essential to obviate this danger.

Organization (See Diagram 3 on page 22.)

The choices are a composite of elective and directive courses. Whether or

not a pupil fails an examination at the end of his studies does not affect the attempt to reconcile free choice and balance within each pupil's curriculum. The same principle applies within studies, so that pupils, for example in the engineering groups, will be choosing a variety of experiences to arrive at basic principles. There is greater variation of choice in the individual subject area, but the need to reconcile balance and free choice requires some limitations. English, mathematics, physical education, modern studies including religious education - a new development in year IV (see diagram) - are core subjects. One of each of the humanities, science and art/music must be chosen. The reconciliation principle is built into the group subjects, e.g. a boy wishing to take an engineering option will take mathematics, English, physical education, and within the option will be practical work in the workshops, physics, technical drawing, art, music and modern studies. A girl wishing to take a 'design for living' option will take mathematics, English, physical education, and within the option will be cookery, homecare, child care, work study, human biology, art, music and modern studies. Commercial studies is the most difficult to achieve balance within, for time demands exclude a science in the choice. Whenever possible choices are accommodated.

There is a 40-period week, an extra period is available for GCE music choice. The individual subject choices allow a maximum of nine external examination subjects, a minimum of six. The group subjects allow a maximum of eight with no minimum.

Setting is across the ability range in mathematics and English and within options, where these are numerically viable. It is not precise except between GCE and CSE sets which are not finalized until the end of year IV. Remedial groups remain for mathematics and English but are re-absorbed for all other subjects. The range of examination intent varies from GCE to none and there is relative flexibility within this - in every year a pupil's external examination battery has varied from CSE grade 1 or GCE to no entry. For example:

(a) Boy with VRQ 83 (verbal reasoning quotient) - art (O level), woodwork (CSE,2), technical drawing (2), modern studies (4), mathematics (5), physics (5), English no examination.

(b) Girl with VRQ 70 - art (O level, 3), CSE art (1), domestic science (1), English (2), history (1), mathematics (5), French (4), biology (3).

Staffing demands are necessarily heavy but viability is sought by concentrating choices into pools. Sometimes the needs for vocation or balance and the individual interest mean that this method has to be varied; for example, biology is in a block but also exists as an isolated choice with only one set. History is similarly placed in order to cater for the two sciences, two humanities intent.

In order to provide for minority and ordinarily unviable subject choices elsewhere in the curriculum, particularly religious education, the general religious education groups are large. Similarly, to provide leeway, very large group teaching is organized intentionally, for example film appreciation in years I and II, with 120 children and two staff.

Accommodation/Resources. Accommodation, particularly of ordinary classrooms, is at a premium. The existence of six house dining-rooms, which are in fact one and a half teaching spaces each, has robbed the school of three classrooms and six laboratories, and this means that careful utilization is needed. Staff try to ensure that laboratories are used for practical work

only and that theory is done elsewhere, particularly by the sixth form. Team teaching with large groups on specific occasions enables economic use of house rooms and hall. Block teaching, i.e. groups of twenty, in craft subjects enables full use of specialist rooms. The link with the local technical college gives valuable extra space in years IV, V and VI, and its staffing assistance is equally helpful. Landings and foyers are also used for group discussion or as activity areas. In a building designed for more flexible teaching situations, and not as a series of boxes, these could no doubt be called 'resource areas'. The school particularly values its links with the local sports centre, canoe club, sailing club and riding stables which enable pupils in their fourth year to opt for a range of games activities which would be the envy of some public schools.

Outside staffing resources-from local marriage guidance, family planning and health clinics, police, clergy, social workers, personnel offices and careers advisory offices - are used to provide smaller discussion groups. For instance, a youth centre leader comes in once a week to take individual groups of fifteen pupils in the term before they leave. Parental help has also to be used to accompany excursions and visits.

In a complex school system there is a very real need for ancillary clerical and technical assistance for teachers. This school has gone far beyond the 'chalk, talk and one caretaker' stage.

5. Towards the sixth form and further education

Forty per cent of a year group stay in full-time education until they are 17: 30 to 33 per cent in the sixth and 10 to 7 per cent in technical college.

The individual choices in years IV and V are designed so that continuity is possible both with further education and with the school's own sixth-form courses. Staff do not subscribe to the idea that in all subjects it is necessary to take an O-level examination before starting an A-level course: biology, art, history, economics and religious education can be started at sixth-form level.

The group subject choices are closely related to the departments at the technical college - particularly engineering, home economics, child care, art, pre-nursing and commerce. Staff are experimenting with link courses between the school and technical college whereby continuous assessment and CSE will give exemption from the first year's examination for City and Guilds courses.

The school's main concern is that a demand for education beyond the age of 16 is developing from fourth- and fifth-year studies which do not fall neatly into either O-level extension courses or A-level or vocational courses, and with which it is ill equipped to deal as yet. The advent of a sixth- or seventh-year examination other than A level, would be welcomed.

During the fifth year, all pupils are seen by careers advisory officers, both in groups to give information and individually. Pupils and parents are seen individually by the deputy head and senior mistress so that they can be given advice on further education and careers.

The outstanding problem is the wasted talent of early leavers and for this reason staff welcome the raising of the school leaving age. The school's choice structure leads naturally to this, but resources will be

at full stretch. Financial resources tend to be outstripped by these plans and a full fourth- and fifth-year programme can so easily be run at the expense of resources available in earlier years.

The school finds itself in a dilemma often enough in trying to reconcile balance, interest and vocation. Its use of the careers motive can backfire and there has been a significant drift towards 'useful academic' subjects at the expense of practical and aesthetic subjects. Staff sympathize with the recipient of the apocryphal letter from the father who wished his son to drop religious education and concentrate on something more useful to him in after-life.

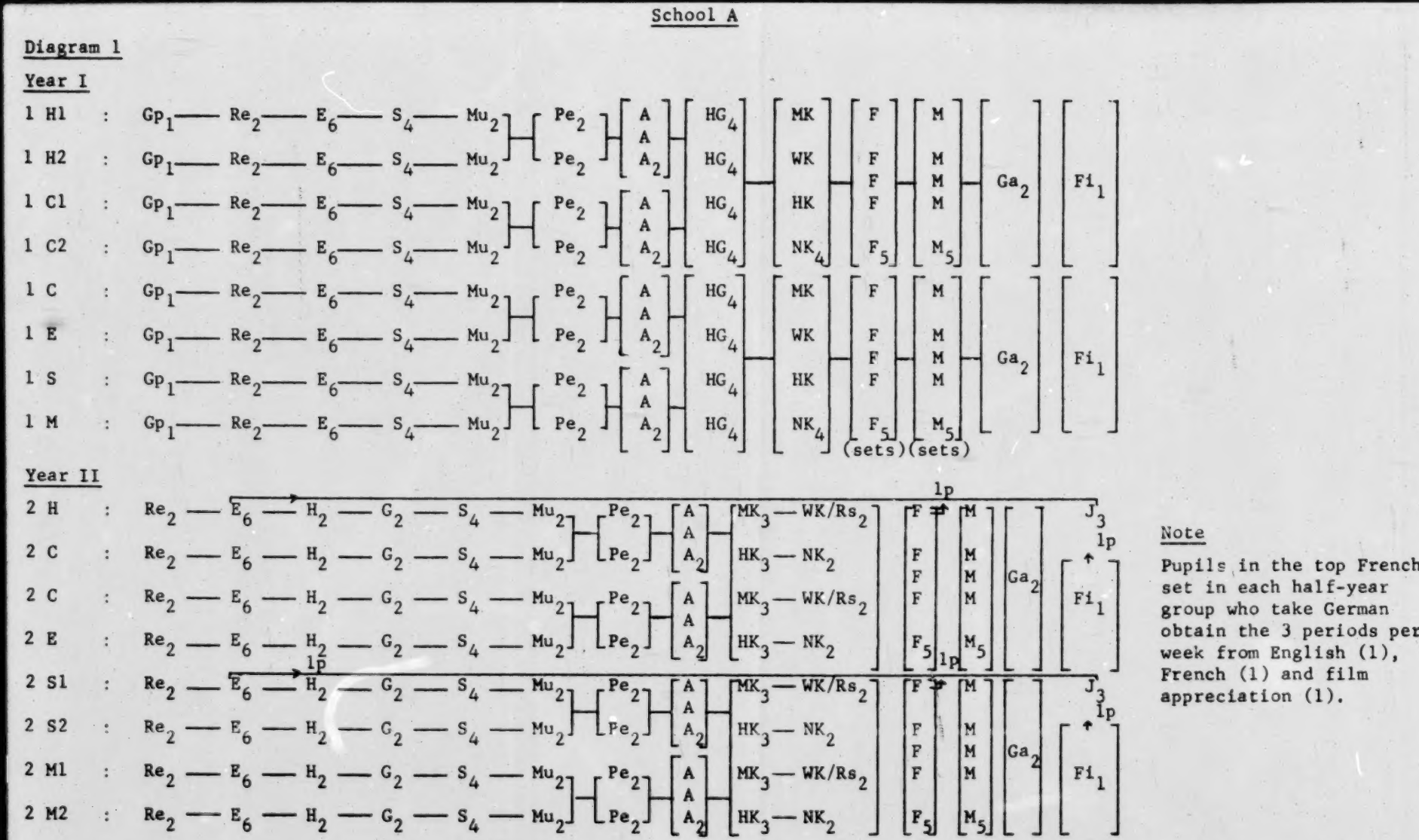
The major determining factor is the quality and quantity of staff. The staffing ratio is ordinarily 1:19/20. This means that staff work at full stretch, and house staff are inhibited in their work by the shortage of hours in a day.

Staff are appointed by a sub-committee of the governors, but heads of department are involved in the selection. Candidates themselves are given ample opportunity to meet the staff and size up the situation.

Staff, too, are involved in decision making and are kept in the picture on the overall financial, staffing and accommodation situation. These patterns of organization have not been a blueprint but have evolved empirically by staff discussion on the needs of the pupils as they see them. Regular staff meetings and small group working parties provide the means of evaluation and the mechanism of change - 'they might die of overwork, never of boredom'.

School A

Diagram 1


Year I
1 H1 : Gp1 — Re2 — E6 — S4 — Mu2 Pe2 A A A2 HG4 MK F M
1 H2 : Gp1 — Re2 — E6 — S4 — Mu2 Pe2 A A A2 HG4 WK F M
1 C1 : Gp1 — Re2 — E6 — S4 — Mu2 Pe2 A A A2 HG4 HK F M Ga2 Fi1
1 C2 : Gp1 — Re2 — E6 — S4 — Mu2 Pe2 A A A2 HG4 NK4 F5 M5
1 C : Gp1 — Re2 — E6 — S4 — Mu2 Pe2 A A A2 HG4 MK F M
1 E : Gp1 — Re2 — E6 — S4 — Mu2 Pe2 A A A2 HG4 WK F M
1 S : Gp1 — Re2 — E6 — S4 — Mu2 Pe2 A A A2 HG4 HK F M Ga2 Fi1
1 M : Gp1 — Re2 — E6 — S4 — Mu2 Pe2 A A A2 HG4 NK4 F5 M5
(sets) (sets)
Year II
2 H : Re2 — E6 — H2 — G2 — S4 — Mu2 Pe2 A A A2 MK3 — WK/Rs2 F M J3
2 C : Re2 — E6 — H2 — G2 — S4 — Mu2 Pe2 A A A2 HK3 — NK2 F M Ga2 Fi1
2 C : Re2 — E6 — H2 — G2 — S4 — Mu2 Pe2 A A A2 MK3 — WK/Rs2 F M
2 E : Re2 — E6 — H2 — G2 — S4 — Mu2 Pe2 A A A2 HK3 — NK2 F5 M5
2 S1 : Re2 — E6 — H2 — G2 — S4 — Mu2 Pe2 A A A2 MK3 — WK/Rs2 F M J3
2 S2 : Re2 — E6 — H2 — G2 — S4 — Mu2 Pe2 A A A2 HK3 — NK2 F M Ga2 Fi1
2 M1 : Re2 — E6 — H2 — G2 — S4 — Mu2 Pe2 A A A2 MK3 — WK/Rs2 F M
2 M2 : Re2 — E6 — H2 — G2 — S4 — Mu2 Pe2 A A A2 HK3 — NK2 F5 M5
1p
1p
1p
1p
1p

Note

Pupils in the top French set in each half-year group who take German obtain the 3 periods per week from English (1), French (1) and film appreciation (1).

Note: The key to abbreviations used is given on page 37

Diagram 2

Year III, Tutor groups

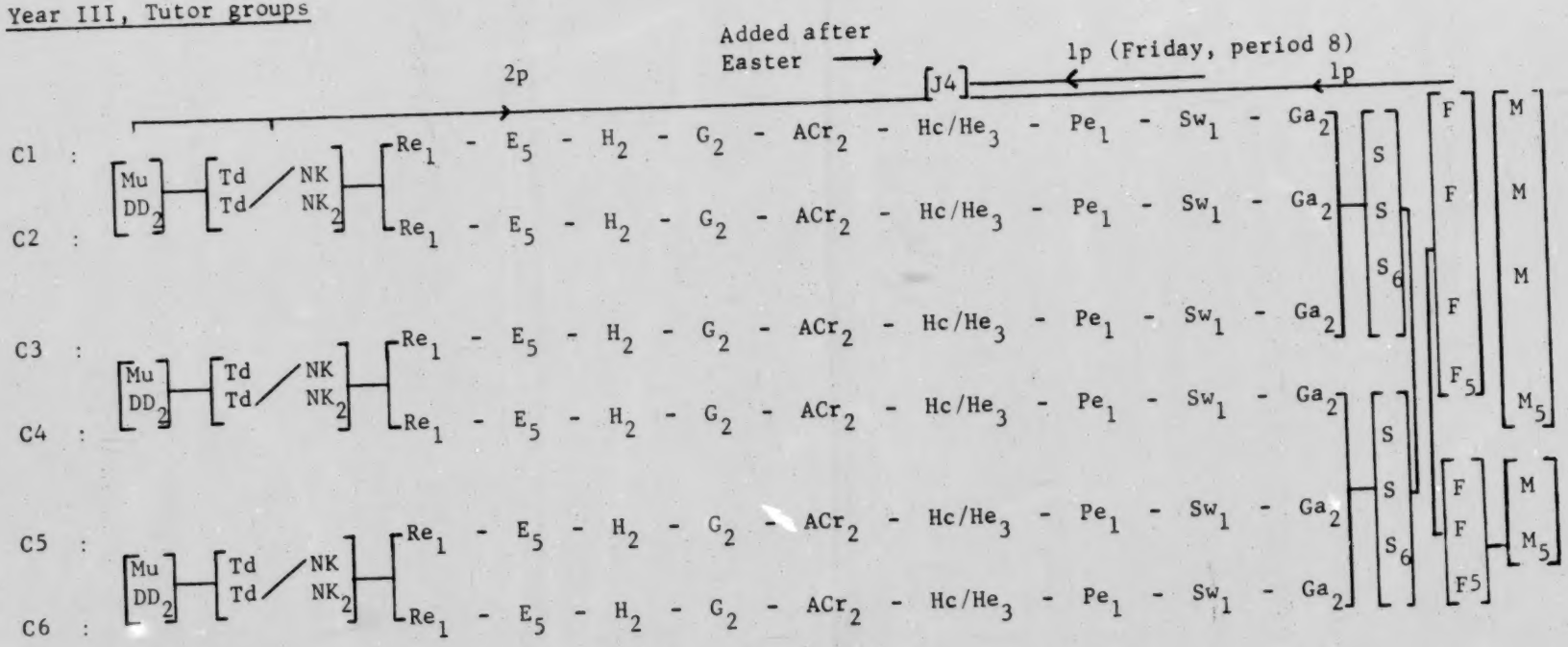
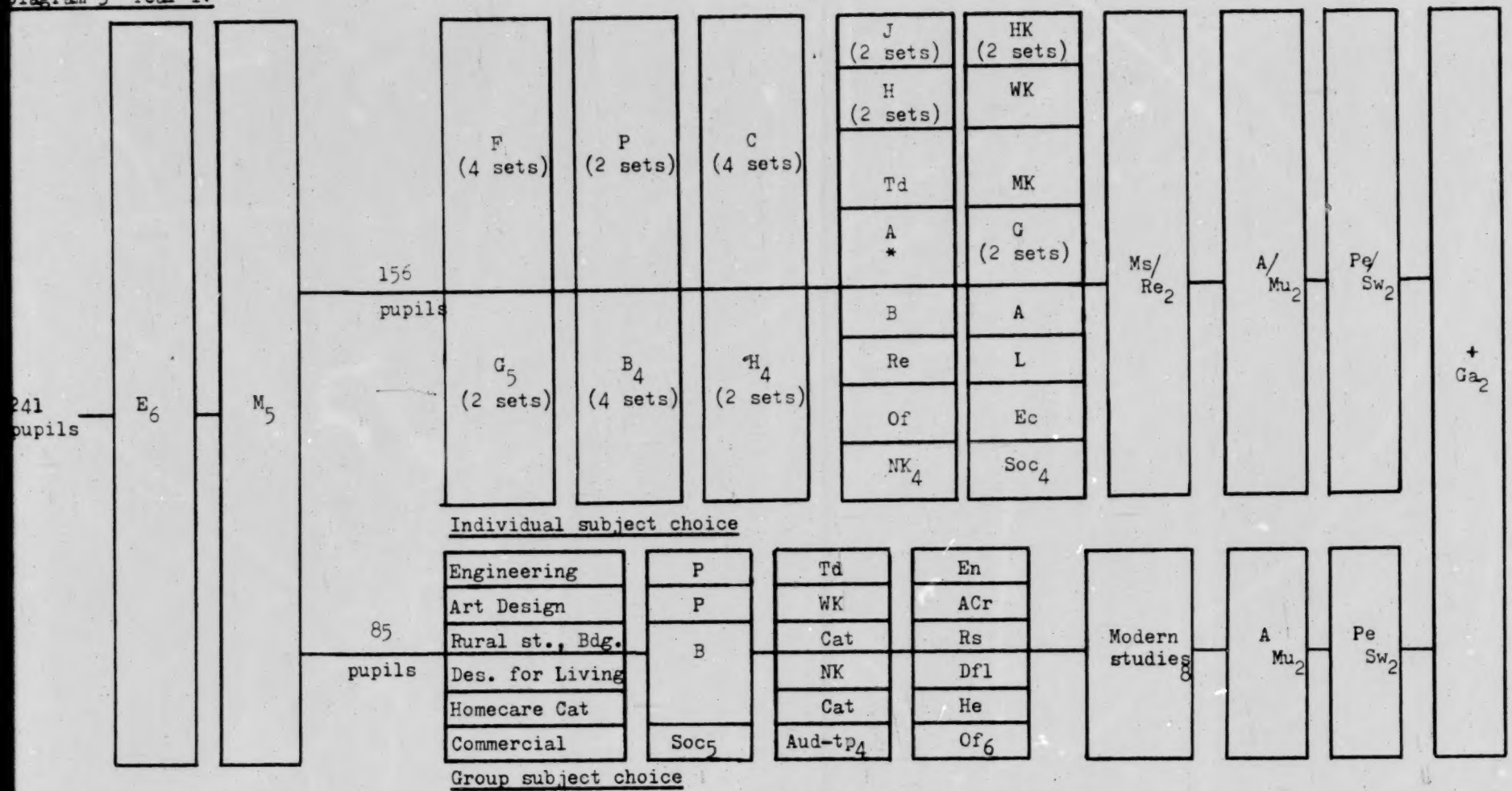


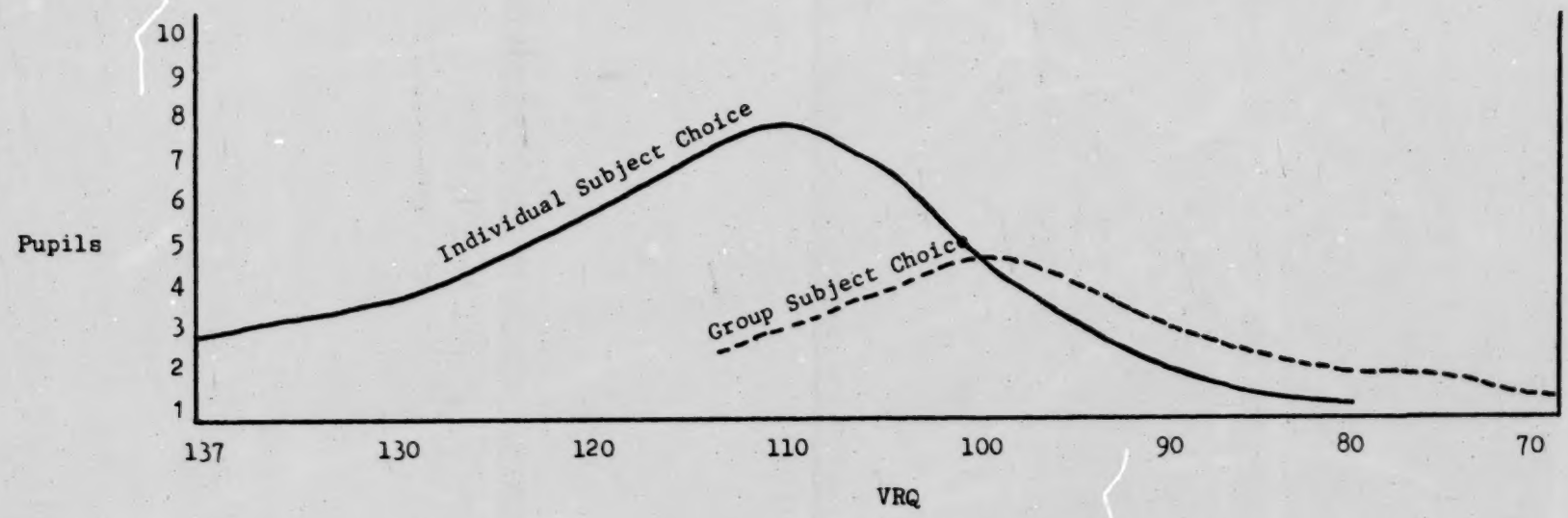
Diagram 3 Year IV



* Available as a choice, but small demand made group non-viable.

\+ Games choice: PE, swimming, judo, basketball, volleyball, table tennis, badminton, horse riding, field games.

Diagram 4 'Individual subject'/'group subject' pupil distribution according to VRQ (1970-71)



III. SCHOOL B

1. Background

The school was designed to accommodate pupils in the three small old 'urban village' localities and the newer council and rapidly growing private estates which are completing the development of the area. A great majority of the parents are local and left school at 14+; a very small number attended grammar school; one or two enjoyed further education. From various surveys it would seem that the family backgrounds could be summarized thus:

5 per cent living in older properties
30 per cent on private estates
65 per cent on council estates.

The school was established in 1963 with a new intake of 11-year-old pupils, and moved into the present buildings in June 1964. It opened with 166 boys and girls in each year which continued until 1971 when a further six-form entry of about 180 pupils was added. In 1971, however, the first-year intake numbered 206 (eighteen having disappeared to existing voluntary selective schools as a direct result of a deliberate change of policy by the education committee) and the school will continue to have an eight-form entry in the future.

The school was designed by the county local education authority as a five-form entry comprehensive school to serve all the children of the area and was absorbed into the county borough in 1966. In addition to the first-year intake in 1963, the school took over the secondary pupils remaining at a modern school which then closed. This school, largely as a result of accommodation problems, had no fifth-form pupils. There was no tradition of voluntary education beyond 15+ and this, coupled with the fact that the new comprehensive pupils were only 11, not only freed the school from examination pressure for a number of years, but also made it necessary that every encouragement should be given to the building up of a different tradition, especially that of staying to undertake the fifth year.

2. Basic organization

The architect had made no provision for house bases and so the school has developed a pattern of lower school (years I and II), main school (years III, IV and V) and sixth forms. Nevertheless, in order to provide a focus for house activities, three groups of rooms have been allocated to houses as 'suites'. Principal tutors are responsible for each of these main provinces and are assisted by senior tutors; between them they undertake responsibility for welfare, counselling, discipline and social organization. The area of responsibility for senior tutors varies, in the lower school by years (a man and a woman to each of the first and second years), in the main school vertically (a man and woman working in partnership in each of the three house-type 'suites' extending from the third year to the fifth) and in the sixth form as a single unit - each pupil thus remains, tutorially and socially, in an area of the school. Principal tutors teach twenty-

seven out of forty periods; senior tutors thirty out of forty. Within each of these main sub-divisions pupils divide into registration groups of about thirty boys and girls of mixed ability in the same age groups. The school draws from eight contributory primary schools and, on the basis of VRQ 'scores', advice from these schools and friendship patterns, the pupils are carefully allocated to tutor groups to ensure proper balance of all abilities, for these groups are also the principal teaching units.

The education welfare officer serving the school and these primary schools is based at the school rather than the education office and is available at the school each day between 9.15 a.m. and 10.45 a.m., thereby achieving direct, personal contact with all senior tutors. For pastoral matters group tutors withdraw pupils in the lower and main school, individually, or in small groups, during assembly time. This compensates for the possible lack of structured time within the school day. Every Monday tutor groups meet for forty minutes. Another feature of the time-table is that years I, II and III (with the exception of the German group in year III - see Diagram 6 on page 35) end the school week a period early, at 3.20 p.m. on Friday.

3. Academic organization of years I to III

The school has developed as an eight-form entry in year I; six-form entry in years II, III, IV; four-form entry in year V; sixth form of eighty-three, making a total roll of 910 with an overall staffing ratio of 1:17.

In years I and II there is a common curriculum for thirty-nine periods a week: the mixed-ability registration groups provide the teaching units in religious education, science, arts and crafts, music, drama, swimming, gymnastics, games, as well as the tutor group period (19/40). For the remaining twenty periods of English, history, geography, French and mathematics, teaching continues in the same registration groups except that the severely retarded readers are withdrawn in small groups, not exceeding fifteen in size, with some of the French period allocation used to provide additional help in English.

There are some minor adjustments in year II: English periods are reduced by one, art and craft by two, to allow for the introduction of handicrafts/needlework/housecraft - three periods, on a half-yearly assignment in each. Additionally, owing to staffing and accommodation difficulties, some music time is replaced by drama or dance drama - and this happens on an ad hoc principle as far as particular groups are concerned. These details appear in Diagrams 5 and 6 on pages 34 and 35). Arrangements for the least academically able pupils are described below.

Year I

The least able fifteen pupils follow the same course, within their own mixed-ability classes, as other pupils for half the school week: religious education 1; science 6; arts and crafts 4 (2 art plus 2 light crafts, including pottery, printmaking, fabrics, woodwork, metalwork, cookery); music 2; drama 1; swimming 1; gym 1; games 2; tutor group period 1.

They leave their classes and come together as a group for half their time: English 6 + 2; French 5 - 2; mathematics 5; geography 2; history 2. A single teacher co-ordinates this work, but French and mathematics specialists take over, or are associated with, the class for work in their fields.

For the two additional English lessons, the pupils come in groups of seven or eight.

Second year

At this stage a geography specialist (instead of a general subjects teacher in year I) takes over the class of least able pupils for three lessons a week. For two of the English lessons, pupils again come in smaller groups.

Third year

The teaching continues to be based primarily on mixed-ability tutor groups. The least able pupils are now with their mixed-ability classes for: arts and crafts 2 periods; handicrafts 3 or home economics 3; needlework 2 (but not technical drawing 2, where they are now generally placed in the smaller and slower of the two groups formed from the boys of each pair of tutor groups); music or dance drama 2 (organized as for technical drawing); religious education 1, swimming 1; physical education 1; games 2; English 5; geography 2; history 2 (23 lessons).

For mathematics (5 periods) they form part of a class of the least able thirty pupils. Instead of French they take work designed to practise or to strengthen reading and writing in English. For science (6) they separate to join one of four parallel classes each made up of pupils remaining after the separation of the ablest sixty pupils at science. The intention here is to emphasize concern and care as pupils move up the school, without letting them in any way become a divisive group.

A number of additional points relate to individual subjects in the third year:

(a) Science

All groups are timetabled simultaneously, but the thirty most able pupils of three tutor groups in one half-year group, together with a similar number from the other three tutor groups, are separated for Nuffield courses in all three subjects. The other four groups each span the remaining ability range but pupils remain within their own half-years and follow a modified Nuffield science course which can lead to Mode III CSE.

(b) French

For staffing reasons it is not possible to teach French in the entire year concurrently. In consequence, French and mathematics are blocked together, the two departments agreeing on a list of the most able 120 pupils. While these take French, the remaining sixty take mathematics, and vice versa.

(i) The most able 120 pupils

After a two-year course heavily biased towards oral methods, the modern languages department lacks adequate information to attempt final grading of pupils. Consequently, they create three parallel classes across the most able ninety pupils and a fourth class of the least able of these 120 pupils. Within this block transfers are possible throughout the year because of concurrent teaching, but at the end of the third year, French classes are firmly graded for work leading to GCE and CSE Mode I, and CSE Mode III in French studies.

In mathematics third-year classes are arranged in two parallel classes across the ablest sixty pupils; the next sixty are graded, and the use of an additional part-time teacher makes three classes of about twenty pupils each possible, instead of two classes of about thirty pupils.

(ii) The least able sixty pupils

For French, these pupils are arranged into a larger class of about thirty pupils, and a smaller class of about fifteen pupils. The remainder, about fifteen pupils (in the main those who were still in the remedial group at the end of the previous year) give up French in favour of additional work to strengthen their English skills; it will be remembered that they have rejoined their own tutor group for normal English work in the third year.

For mathematics, these pupils are arranged in two graded classes, the least able taken by a teacher working in the remedial field, not the mathematics department. Their work begins to diverge from mainstream mathematics.

(c) Handicrafts/technical drawing/home economics/needlework

These are timetabled for two groups at a time, thus allowing setting at the head of department's discretion. Only technical drawing uses this for setting.

(d) Music/dance drama

These groups are divided between music and dance drama according to ability in music.

(e) German

This is offered from Easter in the third year to between fifteen and twenty pupils, deemed to be ablest in French, by a consultative and 'screening' process involving all academic departments. For the summer term in year III, the 4 periods are achieved by taking 1 from French, 2 from technical drawing/needlework or music/dance drama, and by using Friday period 8 (1). The immediate objective is the O-level German examination to be taken in November of the first-year sixth form.

4. Year IV curriculum and organization

Preparation for choices

During years I and II reports are sent to parents every two terms. These reports are compiled by subject teachers and edited by the group tutor, with additional comments from senior and principal tutors. Meetings with parents on particular evenings and/or individual interviews are arranged as soon as possible after the receipt of these reports. A similar pattern follows in years III to VI, but a more deliberately structured educational and vocational guidance programme is built into year III to enable appropriate and effective choices of curriculum to be made by the pupils, in conjunction with parents, staff and Careers Advisory Service officers.

The schedule for the second half of the third year is as follows:

February: School examinations take place.
March: Report evenings are held when all the third-year parents are invited to meet the subject teachers.
April: Headmaster's circular, outlining courses and options within the curricular framework, is issued to the pupils. Before

this a 'sounding' session has been held with the various groups to see what likely response will be forthcoming in the different areas. The headmaster then discusses the circular with all the groups.

May: The headmaster sends a letter to all the third-year parents concerning the fourth-year courses and options. At a meeting of year III parents, the opportunities are explained in detail, with the assistance of the deputy head, senior mistress, principal and senior tutors, group tutors, careers master and Careers Advisory Service staff.

Third-year parents and pupils come to individual day-time interviews with principal tutors and senior mistress to decide the most suitable combination of subjects to continue in year IV. (The careers master is allocated eight periods per week for individual interviews with pupils and for this purpose the staff council (see page 31) has agreed that subject staff will release pupils from lessons.)

The headmaster then provides a preliminary draft of the blocks of likely alternative subject choices to help in guiding options if this should prove necessary.

May/June: The principal tutor then prepares a table for the headmaster showing pupils' preferences by subjects. Using this, the headmaster arranges pupils' subject groups within the academic options section of year IV's curriculum. (See Diagram 7 on page 36.) This may require an increase in the number of pupils in each subject or possibly the elimination of an option, for example making three groups for sixty-nine pupils or abandoning a potential option because only two pupils have chosen it. The headmaster then invites heads of department to comment on the allocation of pupils to groups. This usually leads to some minor rearrangements. Pupils whose options are still in doubt are again interviewed. Final lists are then agreed and published.

Year IV

September: Academic options begin.

November: Inter-option transfers are acceptable until December.

December: In creative arts specialization is delayed until Easter of the fourth year itself. The choice and planning of these options take place during the term leading to Easter and follow similar arrangements. Parents are invited to the school only when there are problems.

Content of curriculum

Within year IV, then, the following pattern of common and optional elements emerges:

(a) Common elements

(i) 'Man and his environment'. This is staffed by volunteers and is allocated four periods concurrently for all fourth-year pupils on a mixed-ability basis as a common non-examined course of studies and activities, including religious education and careers. For the whole year this is timetabled for three periods in one afternoon and for one morning period.

(ii) Physical education and games which include a wide range of optional activities.

(iii) Compulsory examination subjects: English (5), mathematics (5), French (5) - except for the group of pupils who discontinued French in years II and III. In English and French the pupils are 'banded' in three main groups. The most able sixty pupils in both subjects - by agreement amongst the staff concerned - comprise two parallel top groups; the next ninety pupils in both subjects are organized into three parallel middle groups; the least academically able thirty pupils in English are divided into two groups; the thirty pupils who have discontinued French form another group. In mathematics, the pupils are 'setted' across the whole year.

(b) Optional elements

(i) 'Academic options': Three subjects (one, and not more than two of which must be sciences) chosen from physics, chemistry, biology, geography, history, commerce, religious education, typing, in three blocks - A (4 periods), B (4 periods) and C (3 periods). The majority of pupils take physics or biology as an option but, if two sciences are chosen, one must be chemistry.

(ii) 'Creative arts'. Before Easter three creative arts and design subjects from arts and crafts, handicrafts, housecraft, needlework, technical drawing, music/dance drama, over seven periods. At Easter, pupils concentrate on two subjects chosen from this list for CSE Mode I or Mode III examination (there are, deliberately, no O-level options here): painting and drawing, metalwork design, woodwork design, technical drawing and design, electronics, home economics, needlework, music, drama.

(iii) German. This is available as an additional option to ensure that the linguistically able pupils may study an extra language without losing balance in their total curriculum and without causing other pupils to add a further subject to their examination load also. The four periods per week are obtained from French (1), creative arts (1), academic option B (1), 'Man and his environment' (1).

(iv) Pupils who have discontinued French take three periods on various optional activities, including current affairs, typing and office practice. Non-examination courses in engines, materials testing, rural sciences and home-making are offered to all pupils within the academic options framework, although they are designed mainly for the less academically able pupils.

5. Year V

Approximately 50 per cent of a year group complete a fifth year. The present fifth year is the last group to have been taught in graded classes prior to the more general acceptance and use of mixed-ability teaching. The pastoral groups have been reduced to three, but have additional tutor support so that group identities created in previous years can continue.

6. Year VI

First-year VI - sixty-one pupils: second-year VI - twenty-two. Here, there is a unified pattern comprising:

(i) Common compulsory elements - general studies (4), physical education/games or social service (3). General studies, in terminal units, covers social and economic affairs, science studies, computers. All pupils are encouraged to learn to type, within the appropriate terminal unit.

(ii) Examination courses are chosen from a combination of four main blocks and eight simultaneous sub-blocks. Each student chooses the equivalent of seven sub-block subjects:

	3	A-level	(main	block)	subjects	+ 1	O-level/CSE	(sub-block)	
or	2	"	"	"	"	+ 3	"	"	"
or	1	"	"	"	"	+ 5	"	"	"
or	0	"	"	"	"	+ 7	"	"	"

Subjects covered include: English (A and O); geography (A); history (A); economics (A); mathematics (A and O/CSE); statistics (O); physics (A and O); chemistry (A and O); biology (A and O); geology (O); French (A); German (O); art (A); music (A); home economics (A); needlework (CSE); metalwork (A and CSE); technical drawing (A and CSE); woodwork (CSE); commerce (O/CSE); typing; accounts; office practice; shorthand (CSE); British government (O).

(iii) For some classes in most subjects there is combined teaching of upper and lower sixth.

(iv) Private study - a positive element in the curriculum, normally of five periods per week.

7. Staffing implications

The timetable pattern drafted for 140 pupils becomes uneconomical of staff if fifty pupils leave during year IV. Fortunately the 1970/71 loss was abnormal; moreover, economies are effected by condensing certain classes: for example, for English, French and mathematics there are now three or, at the most, four classes in block 3, biology is condensed from two classes to one class in block 4; home economics from two classes to one class in block 5, and technical drawing from two classes to one class also in block 5. Fewer groups are formed for games, physical education and religious education. Pupils are always given the opportunity to complete courses once started.

With the next age group the situation will be considerably eased in this respect, as all pupils will complete their two-year course.

8. Administration

School administration is in the hands of the headmaster, deputy head and senior mistress, together with principal and senior tutors and heads of departments. The school establishment is clerical assistance up to eighty-one hours a week, three laboratory technicians (on T1, T2 and T3 grades) and no other administrative or specialist help.

Principal and senior tutors

These tutors undertake responsibilities for morning assembly, for meals supervision, for registration returns, school reports, attendance, health and day-to-day contact with parents. They meet fortnightly after school to share problems and to agree procedures. The principal tutor of the main school is responsible for the organization of the 'suites' and for educational advice with the senior mistress. The senior tutors are responsible for references for the present fourth-year leavers, and in the fifth years are responsible for drafting leavers' references. In the sixth form the principal tutor is responsible for the students' timetable commitments and for their private study time. The senior mistress arranges the weekly observation sessions at local primary schools and hospitals for intending teachers and nurses. General studies, college and university entrance arrangements are the responsibility of another sixth-form tutor. At all stages the careers master liaises with principal and senior tutors and the careers officer and senior careers officer.

Heads of departments

Heads of departments are responsible for syllabuses and the work of teachers in their departments; they are responsible for internal school examinations and for entries to public examinations. In conjunction with the headmaster they are responsible for the development of new work in their departments, and for new teaching methods appropriate to the new work and the varied teaching units. In the larger departments opportunities to begin this work and to discuss its implications are found in weekly timetabled meetings of the departments. Much preparation of material involves meeting in smaller groups at other times.

Heads of departments themselves meet monthly after school to consider questions of a common interest, for example which O-level board examinations are most appropriate; to initiate matters for staff council consideration; or to take up matters passed on from the staff council.

Staff council

The central policy-making body for the school is the staff council made up of the headmaster, deputy head, senior mistress, two heads of department, two principal/senior tutors and five other members of staff. Apart from the headmaster, deputy head and senior mistress, the staff council is elected annually by a free vote of the entire staff. The staff council meets fortnightly after school from 4.00 p.m. to 6.00 p.m. It depends much on continuity, on staff discussion outside council meetings and much on the principle of general consent rather than on majority vote.

Any member of staff is free to attend the meetings as an observer: the agenda and minutes are put on the staff notice board for staff to see, so that all are fully aware of the items under discussion and the decisions reached.

The staff council gives time to study matters in depth: the first half-hour of each meeting is allocated to matters of lesser importance so that the weightier issues can enjoy unhurried attention. The council has prepared a statement of the aims of the school; it has offered advice about sanctions within the school; it has been actively engaged in the implications for the existing school curriculum of the raising of the school leaving age.

The staff council is the policy-making body of the school. As such it shares the traditional decision-making role of the headmaster in matters of organization, curriculum, pastoral arrangements, school reports, and report evenings for parents, staff duties (though in general terms only) and the broad principles underlying the allocation of rooms to departments and years of the school.

These were some of the matters recently discussed:

(a) A sub-committee was appointed to investigate problems arising from mixed-ability teaching.
(b) The launching of the fourth-year general studies course, 'Man and his environment', in September 1971.
(c) Details of the fourth-form commercial course, September 1971.
(d) The place of counselling.
(e) The role of tutor.
(f) Decision about gradings to be used for school reports, and an inquiry into the benefits and costs of report evenings (the PTA was also consulted).
(g) Pastoral organization for 1972, including the defined areas of responsibility of principal tutors, senior tutors and tutors.

(h) Further discussion following a report on the previous year's work with non-examination pupils in the fourth year, which led to a decision to integrate their courses with the main structure of school courses, some of which would lead to examination work.

(i) A further look at the curriculum for fourth-year pupils. This led to an adjustment of time allocation between 'Man and his environment' on the one hand and the academic options on the other.

(j) A discussion of the decision to begin fourth-form studies immediately following the end of O-level examinations, using a modified timetable, and allowing scope for a few conferences and visits of general studies type.

(k) A consideration of possible uses of the existing primary school premises (on the same site) when these are incorporated into the school in 1972. This resulted in a decision to make them the registration base for first-year pupils and the centre for English and drama studies. It was strongly recommended that first-year pupils should, if possible, spend the first three periods of each day in that area and the adjacent music block.

(l) Decisions were also taken about vending machines, arrangements for sandwiches, and sixth-form uniform. These matters were discussed by senior tutors and by the sixth form whose representatives attended the meetings when decisions were made.

There is no prefect system nor elected school council representatives of pupils. Sixth-formers, however, through their own committee take a large measure of responsibility for their own internal and social organization. They assist, with representatives of the fifth form, with field study courses and with the running of a variety of school societies. The fifth- and sixth-form pupils occupy the youth-wing premises on the school site for their common room areas at break, at dinner time and for some time after 4.0 p.m. School clubs and societies, games fixtures and training sessions, orchestras, choirs and drama groups are active each evening of the week, and it is not uncommon to find about 150 pupils (i.e. one in six) in the school at 5.30 p.m.

9. Curriculum problems

The school has gradually moved from an earlier pattern of 'graded sets' to an organization of greater flexibility, responsive to aspirations and pressures from the staff as a whole. The increased share of the staff in policy making necessitates an increased discipline among subject teachers in the preparation of materials, the pooling of experience and the operation of agreed and unified schemes of work. Inside the staff council itself the right of veto is less feasible and less desired. All this emphasizes the need for teachers to take a wider view of their professional role than that of a subject teacher, or a head of department or a senior/principal tutor. The implications of secondary reorganization and the opportunities of new kinds of public examination inevitably command time and thought. Thus, the existence of a staff council made it possible to examine the fourth- and fifth-year curriculum in its larger context and to restructure it to take into account, for 1971/72, the immediate implications of the raising of the school leaving age and the advance through the school of mixed-ability classes.

This resulted in advancing the time for starting academic and creative options from Easter in the fourth year to the beginning of the fourth year. Two reasons were apparent:

(a) the advent of the raising of the school leaving age necessitated a change in policy for all fourth-year pupils and
(b) staff were anxious to avoid over-concentration on examination work within the previous shorter span of time.

From this there also emerged the introduction of the 'Man and his environment' course as a general studies element to close certain gaps in curriculum and experience which the council felt earlier specialism had left.

The achievements of these mixed-ability groups will be the next major issue to require attention. Up till now recommendations have come from departments, and the go-ahead previously was the responsibility of the headmaster. Organizational factors have played a part in determining whether a particular development was feasible in terms of teacher supply or accommodation, and these factors cannot be neglected in the future. What considerations should be given to general direction, to overall attitudes and atmosphere? Should individual departments be asked to accept a possible small diminution in advantage if probable overall benefit calls for the application of a more uniform pattern? These are questions of judgement and of value involving a large measure of understanding, tolerance and awareness of interdependence. There seems no reason why the staff council should not arrive at satisfactory solutions to problems of this kind.

Finally, there has been, so far, no attempt to involve pupils directly in the shaping of the school curriculum; it is possible that this, too, might be a development of the future.

School B

Diagram 5 Curriculum pattern and organization

Year I, Tutor groups

A1 : $Gp_1 - Re_1 - Dr_1 - S_6 - Mu_2 - ACr_4 - Pe_1 - Sw_1 - Ga_2 - E_6 - H_2 - G_2 - F_5 - M_5$

A2 : $Gp_1 - Re_1 - Dr_1 - S_6 - Mu_2 - ACr_4 - Pe_1 - Sw_1 - Ga_2 - E_6 - H_2 - G_2 - F_5 - M_5$

A3 : $Gp_1 - Re_1 - Dr_1 - S_6 - Mu_2 - ACr_4 - Pe_1 - Sw_1 - Ga_2 - E_6 - H_2 - G_2 - F_5 - M_5$

A4 : $Gp_1 - Re_1 - Dr_1 - S_6 - Mu_2 - ACr_4 - Pe_1 - Sw_1 - Ga_2 - E_6 - H_2 - G_2 - F_5 - M_5$

A5 : $Gp_1 - Re_1 - Dr_1 - S_6 - Mu_2 - ACr_4 - Pe_1 - Sw_1 - Ga_2 - E_6 - H_2 - G_2 - F_5 - M_5$

A6 : $Gp_1 - Re_1 - Dr_1 - S_6 - Mu_2 - ACr_4 - Pe_1 - Sw_1 - Ga_2 - E_6 - H_2 - G_2 - F_5 - M_5$

$- E_8 - H_2 - G_2 - F_3 - M_5$

Year II, Tutor groups

B1 : $Gp_1 - Re_1 - Dr_1 - S_6 - Mu_2 - ACr_2 - Hc/He_2 - Pe_1 - Sw_1 - Ga_2 - E_5 - H_2 - G_2 - F_5 - M_5$

B2 : $Gp_1 - Re_1 - Dr_1 - S_6 - Mu_2 - ACr_2 - Hc/He_2 - Pe_1 - Sw_1 - Ga_2 - E_5 - H_2 - G_2 - F_5 - M_5$

B3 : $Gp_1 - Re_1 - Dr_1 - S_6 - Mu_2 - ACr_2 - Hc/He_2 - Pe_1 - Sw_1 - Ga_2 - E_5 - H_2 - G_2 - F_5 - M_5$

B4 : $Gp_1 - Re_1 - Dr_1 - S_6 - Mu_2 - ACr_2 - Hc/He_2 - Pe_1 - Sw_1 - Ga_2 - E_5 - H_2 - G_2 - F_5 - M_5$

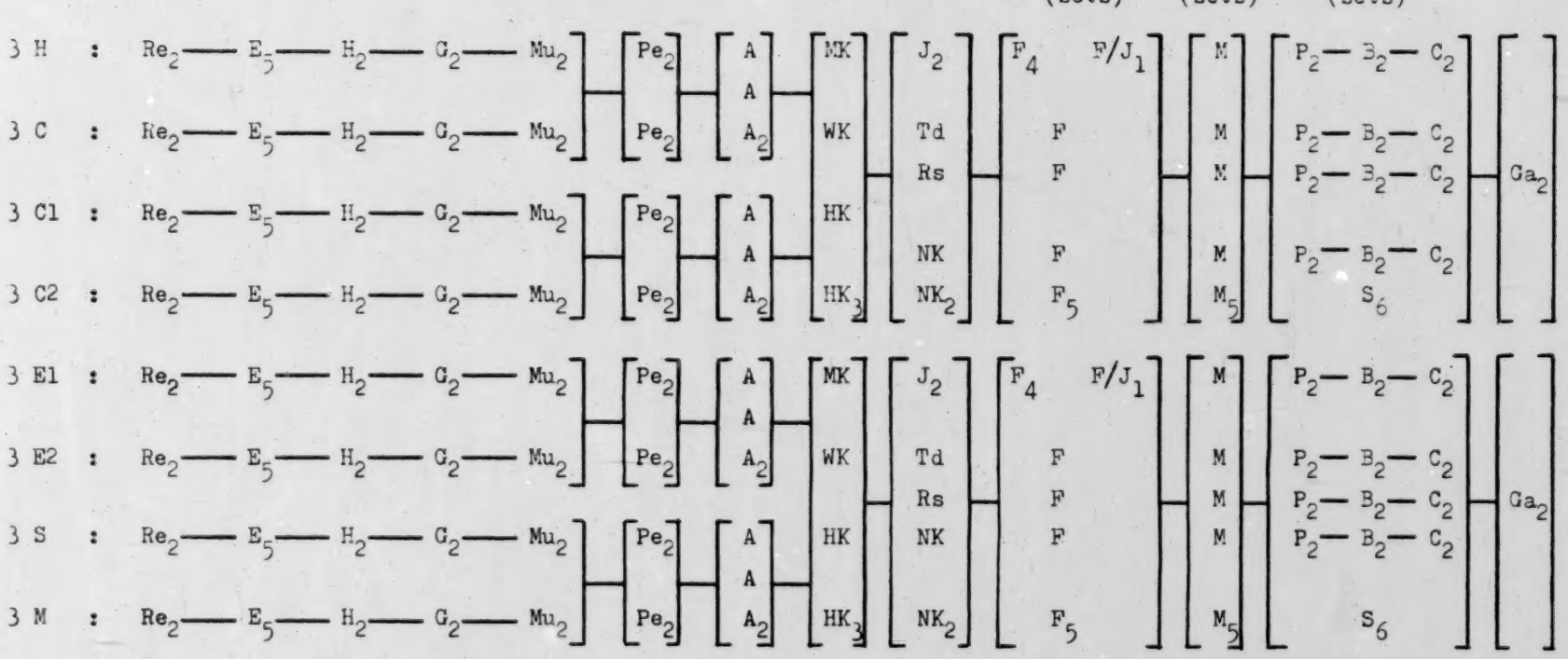
B5 : $Gp_1 - Re_1 - Dr_1 - S_6 - Mu_2 - ACr_2 - Hc/He_2 - Pe_1 - Sw_1 - Ga_2 - E_5 - H_2 - G_2 - F_5 - M_5$

B6 : $Gp_1 - Re_1 - Dr_1 - S_6 - Mu_2 - ACr_2 - Hc/He_2 - Pe_1 - Sw_1 - Ga_2 - E_5 - H_2 - G_2 - F_5 - M_5$

$E_8 - H_2 - G_2 - F_3 - M_5$

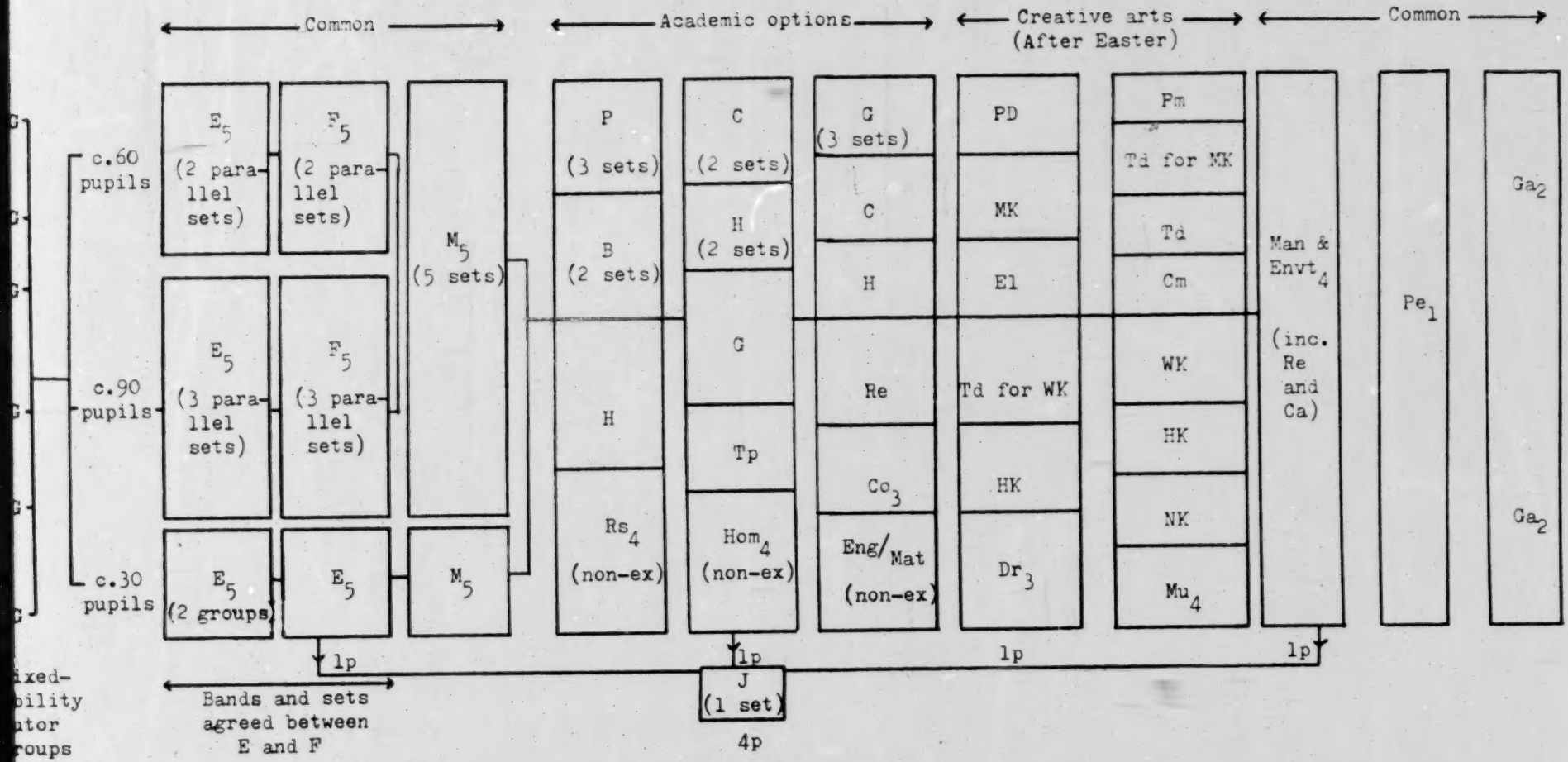
Note: (a) Figures denote number of periods per week
(b) Key to abbreviations given on page 37

Diagram 6 Year III


(sets) (sets) (sets)
3 H : Re2 — E5 — H2 — G2 — Mu2 Pe2 A MK J2 F4 F/J1 M P2 — B2 — C2
3 C : Re2 — E5 — H2 — G2 — Mu2 Pe2 A2 WK Td F M P2 — B2 — C2
Rs F M P2 — B2 — C2 Ga2
3 C1 : Re2 — E5 — H2 — G2 — Mu2 Pe2 A HK
NK F M P2 — B2 — C2
3 C2 : Re2 — E5 — H2 — G2 — Mu2 Pe2 A2 HK3 NK2 F5 M5 S6
3 E1 : Re2 — E5 — H2 — G2 — Mu2 Pe2 A MK J2 F4 F/J1 M P2 — B2 — C2
3 E2 : Re2 — E5 — H2 — G2 — Mu2 Pe2 A2 WK Td F M P2 — B2 — C2
Rs F M P2 — B2 — C2 Ga2
3 S : Re2 — E5 — H2 — G2 — Mu2 Pe2 A HK NK F M P2 — B2 — C2
3 M : Re2 — E5 — H2 — G2 — Mu2 Pe2 A2 HK3 NK2 F5 M5 S6

Note: German (J) : the 2 periods and single period are combined to give the 3 periods per week which is allocated to the set in each half-year group.

Diagram 7 Year IV



Note: (a) Pupils with special difficulty can be withdrawn into small remedial reading groups.
(b) Before Easter 'Creative arts' consists of 7 periods per week of music or dance drama, technical drawing or needlework, and handicraft or housecraft (as in year III).

Diagrams of curriculum and organization : list of abbreviations

A	Art
ACr	Art and Craft
B	Biology
C	Chemistry
Ca	Careers
Cat	Catering
Cm	Ceramics
Co	Commerce
Cr	Craft
DD	Dance drama
Dfl	Design for living
Dr	Drama
E	English
Ec	Economics
El	Electronics
En	Engineering
Eng	Engines
F	French
Fi	Film appreciation
G	Geography
Ga	Games
Gp	Group period
H	History
Hc	Handicraft
He	Home economics
HK	Housecraft
Hom	Home-making
J	German
L	Latin
M	Mathematics
Mat	Materials testing
MK	Metalwork
Ms	Modern studies
Mu	Music
NK	Needlework
Of	Office practice
P	Physics
PD	Painting and drawing
Pe	Physical education
Pm	Printmaking
R	Russian
Re	Religious education
Rs	Rural science or rural studies
S	Science
Sd	Shorthand
Soc	Social economics
Sw	Swimming
Td	Technical drawing
Tp	Typewriting
WK	Woodwork

IV. SOME QUESTIONS FOR STUDY

Preparation for the fourth and fifth years

(a) What type of pastoral organization will allow maximum stability for pupils, opportunity for group/form tutors to get to know individuals well, and maximum flexibility over academic organization?

(b) What are the advantages and disadvantages of a banded organization? What are the effects of any curricular difference between bands?

(c) Which teaching groups, if any, should be unstreamed? What will this decision imply for teaching methods and staff preparation? In what subjects, if any, will setting be necessary, and when and how will it be organized?

(d) What policy should be adopted to meet:

(i) the 'remedial' needs of pupils,
(ii) the needs of chronically slow learners?

What is meant by 'remedial education'? What are the advantages, disadvantages and implications for future fourth- and fifth-year organization of remedial education in the early years based on:

(i) separate 'remedial' class or group for much of the curriculum;
(ii) the organization of extraction groups;
(iii) opportunity for a 'remedial' teacher to work with pupils in their normal teaching groups, for example through timetabling with a block of classes in its work in a particular department one more teacher than there are normal teaching groups;
(iv) a combination of (ii) and (iii)?

(e) What implications have developments in the school's philosophy and approach to the curriculum and organization of the early years, e.g. for interdisciplinary studies or mixed-ability teaching groups or team teaching, for the fourth and fifth years?

(f) To what extent are decisions, which imply a degree of specialization and/or affect fourth-year organization and pupil choice, made, or should be made, before the beginning of the fourth year? What, for example, is the school's policy over the introduction of a second foreign language:

(i) When is it introduced?
(ii) When introduced, is it as an additional element in the curriculum of the pupils concerned or is it at the expense of another element?
(iii) Once started, may a second foreign language be discontinued at the end of the third year, even if it has only been studied for one year?

(g) What policy should be adopted over guiding and counselling pupils

over fourth- and fifth-year courses and options? How are the differing opportunities provided for pupils in the fourth and fifth years communicated to:

(i) pupils;
(ii) parents;
(iii) staff responsible for guiding and counselling third-year pupils;
(iv) staff in a college of further education?

What opportunities are provided for helping pupils and/or parents experiencing particular difficulties over choice? With whom does the ultimate decision lie in the event of conflict between the aspirations of a pupil and/or parent and staff's assessment of the pupil's ability to pursue the particular course with reasonable success?

(h) What is the school's policy over careers education and guidance, and what interrelationships should exist between it and the procedures adopted in helping pupils and parents over choice of fourth- and fifth-year courses? In what ways, if any, should the careers officer be involved?

(i) In districts where transfer of school takes place at 14+, what co-operation exists between the upper schools and its contributory school(s) to ensure:

(i) continuity within the curriculum;
(ii) effective guidance of pupils over curriculum choices which affect them immediately on arrival in the upper school?

Fourth- and fifth-year organization

(a) How well does the organization cater for the whole ability range? Should some pupils in the main not work towards external examinations? Should some pupils follow a separate course fully or in part? If so, can one prevent such an organization having a divisive effect?

(b) Does the organization allow appropriate flexibility between GCE, CSE and non-examination objectives?

(c) How well does your proposed organization allow for the full educational needs of the pupils? Do either the timetable or preliminary conditions affecting choices (i) allow, (ii) ensure a balanced curriculum? If curriculum choice is to be allowed in the fourth year, what types of criteria might be used to ensure balance and to avoid an undue degree of early specialization?

(d) How well does the organization cater for the varied abilities, aptitudes, interests and aspirations of pupils? (See Schools Council, Enquiry 1: Young School Leavers (HMSO, 1968)).

(e) What is the examination load on pupils? Is it reasonable or appropriate that, whether or not they are ultimately presented for the examination, most pupils should follow examination courses throughout their curriculum except in religious education, physical education and games? Should there be an area of the curriculum, possibly concerned with the development of an understanding of certain broad issues involving value judgements rather than cognitive and more easily measurable skills, which might not be presented for external assessment?

(f) What place, if any, might there be for integrated courses of the outward-looking and outward-going type? Should courses of this type in the main be limited to pupils of lesser academic ability and/or motivation? What is the place of (i) careers education, (ii) short-stay residential experience 'within the curriculum'?

(g) Linking with (c), there are a number of outstanding and difficult questions facing many schools in practice, such as:

(i) What policy should be adopted over allowing three separate sciences, and hence possibly as many as 17 periods per 35- or 40-period week for science and mathematics?
(ii) In what circumstances, if any, is it reasonable for a pupil to study as many as three foreign languages, e.g. Latin, French and German? What implications are there for the rest of his/her curriculum?
(iii) What policy should be adopted over commercial studies?

(h) Mobility of population is a factor affecting many schools. How well is the organization likely to cater both for pupils arriving at the school and for those leaving during years IV and V?

Preparation for the sixth year and/or further education

(a) To what extent and in what ways should the curriculum and organization of the fourth and fifth year be affected by subsequent opportunities in the school sixth form and in further education. For example:

(i) What implications do general education in the fourth and fifth years (see (e) and (f) page 39), sixth-form general studies and liberal studies in further education have for each other?
(ii) In careers education, or courses incorporating work observation or experience, what contacts have been established with local colleges of further education?
(iii) To what extent are vocationally orientated courses in schools providing helpful bases for subsequent vocational education in colleges? Do courses, for example, concentrate on too narrow a range of skills which might duplicate the work of colleges and/or restrict a pupil's career expectations in a way which does not allow sufficiently for fluctuation and change in patterns of local employment?
(iv) What regular and permanent use should the school make of linked courses with a local college of further education as a planned and integral part of the fourth- and fifth-year curriculum?

(b) What information and guidance are provided in the fifth year on opportunities in the school sixth form and in local colleges of further education? In what ways are pupils being helped to understand the range of ultimate careers' opportunities possible from different combinations of sixth-form study?

Some general issues affecting fourth- and fifth-year organization

(a) What are the demands of the proposed fourth- and fifth-form organization on staffing, and what are their implications for:

(i) what is provided elsewhere in the school;
(ii) allowance of time to heads of houses or sections of the school, careers staff, heads of academic department for the needs of pastoral and academic leadership?

Are undue sacrifices being made elsewhere in order to 'subsidize' the fourth and fifth years? What are the school's priorities in staff deployment?

(b) In considering demands on resources (staffing, accommodation, equipment, finance) what balance should be made between the claims of long established needs and subjects and those of new developments in the curriculum? What policy, for example, should be adopted over the allocation of staff to areas of particular curriculum development, e.g. integrated studies and the humanities?

(c) How might staff other than the head teacher, the deputy and the senior master/mistress be involved in study and discussion of curriculum and organization? How should decisions over curriculum and organization be made, and how should they be communicated to (i) staff, (ii) pupils, (iii) parents, (iv) governors, (v) the LEA, (vi) those concerned in further education?

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